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Will Romania change its stance on the Danube Soya Declaration?

Report Categories:

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals
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Report Highlights:

In absence of an agreement with the scientific community and agricultural producers, Romania did not adhere to the Danube Soya Declaration during the Green Week event held in Berlin in mid-January. Nevertheless, one week later, the Romanian Agriculture Minister seems determined to sign the Declaration in February.

General Information:

Only a week after Romania expressed hesitation in signing the Soy Declaration in absence of the agreement from the local scientific stakeholders and agricultural producers, the Ministry of Agriculture (AgMinistry) made public a new position. The Ministry's press release, dated January 28, reminds that the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Daniel Constantin, requested that the academic and producer environments be consulted with the purpose to obtain consensus for signing the Declaration. The press release further states that considering the text of the Declaration and the documentations provided by the "Danube Soya", the agricultural academic group, represented by the management of the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Science, expressed agreement for supporting the Declaration. The release mentions that from the scientific point of view, it is of interest to introduce high-level varieties that would lead to obtaining important productivity gains for farmers. It is noted that such a situation, of course, should not affect any other future decision regarding the cultivation of protein crops.

As the farmers' opinion was important, the AgMinistry planned to hold consultation with producer groups during the week of January 28, 2013. However, despite the importance of farmers' opinion, it appears that Romania may be determined to sign the Declaration regardless the final outcome of consultations with producers: "The consultation with the producers is scheduled to take place this week. Representatives of the Danube Soya are going to discuss with the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the beginning of February, on which occasion the Declaration will be signed."

In response to the above press release, Romanian Farmers' League (LAPAR) strongly reacted to the position change. They expressed appreciation for the AgMinister's previous decision not to support the Declaration noting his view if such an official document would have been signed, the AgMinister would have committed Romania and agricultural producers from high potential field crops and for taking a decision that would have been against the national interest and farmers' interest. The LAPAR warned the AgMinistry on the risks and consequences of signing the Declaration from Berlin and that LAPAR would never agree with signing such a document.

Farmers further expressed their disappointment that despite the fact they are the largest farmers' association they had not been consulted regarding this decision. LAPAR also rejected the lack of transparency in obtaining the agreement from the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Science.

The Danube Soya Association intends to promote GM-free soya cultivation and processing in the Danube region, targeting countries both crossed by the Danube River and neighborhood states.

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